

Linson, C.H.

Drawer 14A

Artists-L

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# Artists of Abraham Lincoln portraits

Corwin Knapp Linson

Excerpts from newspapers and other  
sources

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## A Champion of Lincoln

ABRAHAM LINCOLN probably never had a more ardent champion than Phillips Brooks, rector of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Philadelphia during the Civil War and author of the well-known hymn words *O Little Town of Bethlehem*.

Only once had the young rector met the Great Commoner and shaken the hand of his idol but he stood second to none in the support of the President's ideals and in the defense of his absolute integrity.

Brooks, still in his twenties, never allowed his professional proprieties to hide his own strong Lincoln-like convictions that slavery was "an accursed system" and that racial discrimination was incompatible with the American way of life. He not only denounced segregation forced on his city by the Philadelphia Street Car Directory, which banned Negroes from the cars, but insisted that if the Negro is to be fully emancipated he must be given the freedom of the ballot.

"Republican government does not know such a thing as an unvoicing subject," he wrote, "it has no place for Obeyers and Supporters who are not Governors and Directors too. We have got either to eradicate the Negroes or to integrate them. The first we can't do, the second we must." To this end he gave many months to organize and carry forward the work of Freedmen's Associations in his city, in the nation, and in England.

When the Union troops entered Richmond and the end of the Civil War had come at last, Brooks was asked to offer the prayer at an assembly of grateful citizens in Independence Hall. Much of the spirit if not the echoes of Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address could be heard in that prayer:

Not in mere exaltation, not in bitter and revengeful malice, not in mere pride and selfishness, but in a solemn reverence, in a profound humility, in an absorbing and controlling sense of Thee, may we bow down our heads and thank Thee for the triumph Thou hast given. . . . Come with Thy tenderest consolations to all. . . . Lift all Thy people up, not only to noble action, but to patient suffering. Be the God of mercy, as Thou art the God of strength.

Brooks was planning an Easter sermon of joy and gratitude when early on Sat-

urday morning the news of Lincoln's assassination cast its gloom across the entire nation. In the church, already beautifully decorated for Easter, the flowers were removed and black draperies were hung everywhere. Even the joyous carols planned for the children of the church school were given up. On Easter, 1865, the young rector faced unprecedented crowds who had come believing that in Holy Trinity they would hear fitting words for the occasion and find consolation for their grief.

Phillips Brooks spoke of the appropriateness of Lincoln's death on Good Friday, praised his submission to God's will and said, ". . . he was the man most distinctly and in the best and truest sense an American. . . . I believe from my heart that if there be a man who has left on record that he was a Christian man, a servant and follower of Jesus Christ, it is he who lies in the coffin today."

During the days of mourning Brooks wrote his elder brother: "I have thought so constantly about him . . . that I feel as if he were an old and close friend, and can hardly realize that I never fairly saw him satisfactorily." At a meeting of the Union League on Easter Monday noon Brooks offered the opening prayer of gratitude for the life and influence of Lincoln. An hour later he was addressing the women of Philadelphia who had crowded into every available space in Concert Hall. Associating Lincoln's death with the sin of slavery he challenged these women "by their influence [to] shut out from social intercourse those who palliate the great crime of the century."

At the hour of Lincoln's funeral in Washington on Wednesday noon, April nineteenth, Brooks held a service in Holy Trinity Church. When the President's body arrived in Philadelphia on Saturday afternoon, Brooks joined the members of the Union League as an honor guard to receive it and escorted it to Independence Hall where it was to remain all of Sunday.

Preaching the next day from Psalm 78: 71-73, Brooks gave his most complete appraisal of the martyred President and answered many questions which had been raised in popular discussion about the qualities of Lincoln's life. Pointing to the unique blending of "the greatness of real goodness and the goodness of real greatness" in Lincoln, Brooks went on to say:

"He lived as he did, and he died as he did, because he was what he was. . . . In him goodness and intelligence combined and made their best result of wisdom. For perfect truth consists not merely in the right constituents of character, but in their right and intimate conjunction."

Then, after sketching his physical, moral, and mental powers, Brooks said Lincoln was the true result of "our free life and institutions. . . . Nowhere else than out of the life of freedom could have come that personal unselfishness and generosity which made so gracious a part of this good man's character. . . ."

"In the heartiness of his mirth and his enjoyment of simple joys; in the directness and shrewdness of his perception which constituted his wit; in the untired, undiscouraged faith in human nature which he always kept; and perhaps above all in the plainness and quiet unostentatious earnestness and independence of his religious life, in his humble love and trust of God—in all it was character such as only Freedom knows how to make."

### Mary Todd Marries A. Lincoln

(According to her sister, Mrs. Ninian Edwards, of Springfield, Illinois, 1842.)

Molly was always stubborn. She was born a rebel—saucy, nervous, whimsical. She did not know her mind. We tried to warn

her of the consequences, logical and pitiful to one so gently bred, dainty and petted. He is mighty rough slack-skinned, lank, clumsy, with a craggy head

of coarse black hair. But she got in a huff when we said anything. Is it not odd her eyes would shine with anger when I'd say,

"Mary, do not forget you are a Todd!" She'd flounce out of the room—and so today she got her way and married. No one knows how she could choose him from her proper beaux.

He has no prospects. Any fool can see he is a small town lawyer, nothing more. His kin are poor white trash. Where would he be without my cousin John? Above Speed's store he shared a free bed, took the Butlers' meals, begged Cousin John to let him tote the books and do the paper work.

There's none who feels that he is suitable in breeding, looks, fortune or education for a belle of Louisville cottillions, who has grace and manners learned from Mademoiselle Mentelle.

Where is the noble she saw in his face? Why couldn't she love Douglas? Why, she went and turned from one who may be president!

ULRICH TROUBETZKOY

As though he had not paid his proper tribute, Brooks went on to New York the following day to join in an even larger commemoration. Further emulating the spirit of his hero, Brooks continued to assert, "Negro suffrage has got to come. How much political convulsion we have got to go through before we get it I don't see. The only comfort is that we haven't been brought so far for nothing and shall be seen through somehow."

On the day of national mourning, June 1, 1865, as though sensing his own inadequacy, Brooks preached no sermon but, already recognizing the greatness of Lincoln's ideas and style, read from his speeches and allowed Lincoln to speak.

RAYMOND W. ALBRIGHT

Professor Albright's book "Focus on Infinity: A Life of Phillips Brooks" is due to be published by The Macmillan Company, New York, in April.



"ABRAHAM LINCOLN": A Portrait Study by Sorwin Knapp Linson

The birthday of Abraham Lincoln is boldly underlined in the calendar of American history. This year, there is added significance in the anniversary, for February 12, 1961, marks the centennial of Lincoln's first year in service as 16th President of the United States.

This sketch in water color was executed about 1865 by Sorwin Knapp Linson, an American who at one time studied in Paris with Gerome. The portrait, 28 by 15 1/2 inches, was held by persons who knew Abraham Lincoln to be one of the best likenesses ever made of him.

DOROTHY AOLOW







5.—Abraham Lincoln: a study by the noted portrait artist, C. K. Linson. This study is conceded generally by men who knew Lincoln well, and by artists who have made careful study of Lincoln from the standpoint of portraiture, to be one of the finest studies ever made of Lincoln. Mr. Linson completed this study about ten years ago; since then the original portrait has been greatly in demand for various Lincoln exhibitions held throughout the country, and everywhere it has been received with universal praise.



Linson. C.H.

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